

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 AS-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-15 IO-14 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-01

TRSE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06 LAB-04 EPG-02 SIL-01

OMB-01 ACDA-10 /122 W

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R 061000Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8040

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

CINCPAC

UNCLAS SINGAPORE 2846

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR, ASEAN

SUBJECT: TENTH ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING OPENS

1. SUMMARY. IN SEPARATE ADDRESSES BEFORE THE TENTH ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING, PM LEE AND FM RAJARATNAM TOUCHED ON THE THEMES OF ASEAN SELF-RELIANCE, THE CHANGING NATURE OF THE COMMUNIST THREAT, AND SECRETARY VANCE'S STATEMENT ON U.S. POLICY TOWARD ASIA. END SUMMARY.

2. OPENING SUBJECT MEETING EVENING OF JULY 5, PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW SAID THAT THE DESIRABILITY OF ASEAN AS AN ECONOMIC AND TRADING PARTNER IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE ORGANIZATION'S STRENGTH AND VIGOR. IF WE ARE STRONG, SAID MR LEE, "THEN WE ARE FRIENDS
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WHO ARE DESIRABLE ASSETS TO BE MORE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH, NOT EMBARRASSING LIABILITIES TO BE SHIED AWAY FROM. THIS IS OUR BEST CONTRIBUTION TO THE STABILITY AND SECURITY OF THIS PART OF THE WORLD."

3. LEE'S SPEECH, DECIDEDLY MORE UPBEAT FOR THE

OCCASION THAN HIS USUAL PRONOUNCEMENTS ON THE STATE OF THE WORLD, CENTERED ON THE THEME THAT STABILITY IN THE REGION WAS NOW MORE THAN EVER IN THE HANDS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND NOT DEPENDENT ON THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE SUPER POWERS. LEE TOLD THE DELEGATES THEY WILL HAVE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT IN THEIR DELIBERATIONS THE FACT THAT, LIKE JAPAN, ASEAN HAS TO LIVE WITH A CONTINUOUS LAND MASS WHICH IS COMMUNIST. FORTUNATELY, LEE ADDED, IT IS NO LONGER A MONOLITHIC COMMUNIST BLOC.

4. LEE MENTIONED SECRETARY VANCE'S ASIA SOCIETY SPEECH SAYING THAT THE SECRETARY'S EMPHASIS WAS ON THE ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS AND THAT THE SPEECH WAS TOTALLY DEVOID OF RHETORIC OR IDEOLOGICAL OVERTONES. THE EMPHASIS OF THE SPEECH, LEE SAID, IS ON THE ECONOMICS OF U.S. RELATIONSHIP WITH EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC.

5. THE QUESTION BEFORE ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS, SAID LEE, IS NOT WHETHER ASEAN CAN ENHANCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS AND STABILITY IN ASEAN. ASEAN CAN MAKE THAT DIFFERENCE BUT THE QUESTION IS WHETHER OR NOT THE ORGANIZATION CAN BE DEVELOPED FAR AND FAST ENOUGH TO SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE AGAINST THE TREND IN INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES TOWARD
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PROTECTIONISM.

6. "BEFORE WE CAN ASK THE INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES FOR THE BEST TERMS POSSIBLE, WE MUST DECIDE AMONG OURSELVES HOW MUCH WE ARE PREPARED TO DO TO MAKE ASEAN WORTHWHILE FOR INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENTS," LEE SAID. INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES WILL BROADEN ECONOMIC LINKS WITH ASEAN IF ASEAN TAKEN STEPS WHICH WILL BENEFIT BOTH SIDES.

7. FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM SPEAKING MEETING OF JULY 8 SAID THAT MAJOR THEMES HAD OBSESSED ASEAN COUNTRIES SINCE THE POST-WAR YEARS: ANTI-COLONIALISM AND THE COLD WAR BETWEEN COMMUNIST AND NON-COMMUNIST BLOCS. RAJARATNAM SAID ANTI-COLONIAL ISSUES ARE NOW IRRELEVANT BECAUSE OLD EMPIRES HAVE DISINTEGRATED. NEW TREATS AND CONFLICTS, HOWEVER, HAVE RISEN WITHIN AND BETWEEN THE NEW STATES FORMED IN THE AFTERMATH OF THIS COLONIAL DISSOLUTION. HE CITED OAU MEETING IN GABON AS EXAMPLE OF HOW POLITICAL, IDEOLOGICAL AND ETHNIC DIFFERENCES CAN LEAD TO CONFLICT.

8. RAJARATNAM SAID CONTEST BETWEEN GREAT POWERS HAS CHANGED CHARACTER. ALTHOUGH THE COLD WAR RHETORIC OF THE 1950'S IS DEAD, GREAT POWERS WILL SEEK FRIENDS AND ALLIES ON THE BASIS OF NATIONAL INTERESTS. "THE SOVIET UNION MIGHT STILL PROCLAIM THAT THE ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO BURY CAPITALISM. BUT WHAT IS REALLY SOUGHT IS THE BURIAL OF A SERIOUS RIVAL--BE IT CAPITALIST AMERICAN OR COMMUNIST CHINA."

9. REFERRING TO SECRETARY'S ASIA SOCIETY SPEECH, RAJARATNAM SAID CARTER ADMINISTRATION IS NOT INTERESTED IN LIBERATING COUNTRIES WHICH LACK UNCLASSIFIED

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INTERNAL STRENGTH ECOUNTERING ANY RIVAL WHICH SEEKS TO EXCLUDE AMERICAN INFLUENCE IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD. NOT ONCE IN LENGTHY ADDRESS, HE SAID, DID SECRETARY REFER TO "COMMUNISM" OR THE "FREE WORLD." "AS I READ IT," RAJARATNAM SAID, "THE MESSAGE IS THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION IS NOT CONCERNED WITH WHETHER A COUNTRY IS COMMUNIST OR NOT BUT WHETHER IT IS A FRIEND OR FOE OF AMERICA."

10. FONMIN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT ASEAN COUNTRIES CANNOT EXPECT "RESCUE BRIGADES" TO COME TO THEIR AID SHOULD NON-COMMUNIST STATUS BE THREATEND FROM WITHOUT OR, PARTICULARLY, FROM WITHIN. THEREFORE CONTRIBUTION TO STABILITY AND SECURITY OF SOUTHEAST ASIA MUST COME PRIMARILY FROM ASEAN NATIONS THEMSELVES.

11. ASEAN NATIONS WISH TO LIVE IN PEACE WITH THEIR COMMUNIST NEIGHBORS, HE SAID, ADDING THAT THIS COEXISTENCE SHOULD NOT BE VIEWED AS PRELUDE TO TURMOIL AND DISASTER IN THE REGION. PEACE AND PROSPERITX DEPEND ON BEING GOOD NEIGHBORS RATHER THAN BEING IDEOLOGICALLY COMPATIBLE.

12. EMBASSY COMMENT: LEE AND RAJARATNAM BOTH TOUCHED ON SECRETARY VANCE'S RECENT ADDRESS, PERHAPS NOT EFFUSIVELY, BUT CERTAINLY WITH FULL APPRECIATION OF ITS IMPORTANCE AS A STATEMENT OF AMERICAN INTENTIONS TOWARD ASIA. WHILE GOVERNMENTS IN THE AREA ARE PROBABLY STILL DEIGESTING THE CONTENTS AND ASSESSING THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE SECRETARY'S WORDS, IT SEEMS CLEAR TMAT THE SPEECH WILL DAMPEN THE CHORUS WE HAVE BEEN HEARING RECENTLY ABOUT UNCLASSIFIED

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AMERICAN "INDIFFERENCE" TO SOUTHEAST ASIA.
HOLDRIDGE

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Message Attributes

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